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REFLECTIONS
Critical *and* Satyrical,
UPON A LATE
RHAPSODY,
Call'd, An
ESSAY
UPON
CRITICISM.

By Mr. DENNIS.

*Me Remorsurum petis ?
Melius non Tangere clamo.
Horace.*

L O N D O N :

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Ita
Poe
but
poli
and
per

THE PREFACE.

'**T**IS now almost seven Years, since I happen'd to say one Morning to a certain Person distinguish'd by Merit and Quality, that wherever the Italian Opera had come, it had driven out Poetry from that Nation, and not only Poetry, but the very Taste of Poetry, and of all the politer Arts; and that if the same Protection and Encouragement were continued to the Opera, by which it was then supported, the same

A 2 Cala-

P R E F A C E.

Calamity would befall Great Britain which had happen'd to the Neighbouring Nations. As 'tis hard to find a Man more quick or more penetrating, than the Person to whom I spoke this; he immediately enter'd into that Sentiment, and soon after withdrew that Encouragement which he had given to the Italians. All that I foretold, and more than all hath happen'd. For such Things, such monstrous Things have been lately writ, and such monstrous Judgments pass'd; that what has been formerly said has been sufficiently confirm'd, that 'tis impossible an Author can be so very foolish, but he will find more stupid Admirers.

A most notorious Instance of this Depravity of Genius and Taste, is the Essay upon which the following Reflections are writ, and the Approbation which it has met with. I will not deny but that there are two or three Passages in it with which I am not displeas'd; but what are two or three Passages as to the whole?

*Fit Chærilus ille
Quem bis terq; bonum cum risu miror.*

The approving two or Three Passages amongst a multitude of bad ones, is by no means advantageous to an Author. That little that is
good

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good in him does but set off its contrary, and make it appear more extravagant. The Thoughts, Expressions, and Numbers of this Essay are for the most part but very indifferent, and indifferent and execrable in Poetry are all one. But what is worse than all the rest, we find throughout the whole a deplorable want of that very Quality, which ought principally to appear in it, which is Judgment; and I have no Notion that where there is so great a want of Judgment, there can be any Genius.

However, I had not publish'd the following Letter, but had suffer'd his Readers to have bugg'd themselves in the Approbation of a Pamphlet so very undeserving, if I had not found things in it that have provok'd my Scorn, tho' not my Indignation. For I not only found my self attack'd without any manner of Provocation on my side, and attack'd in my Person, instead of my Writings, by one who is wholly a Stranger to me, and at a time when all the World knew that I was persecuted by Fortune; I not only saw that this was attempted in a clandestine manner with the utmost Falshood and Calumny, but found that all this was done by a little affected Hypocrite, who had nothing in his mouth at the same time but Truth, Candor, Friendship, good Nature, Humanity, and Magnanimity.

'Tis

P R E F A C E.

'Tis for this Reason that I have publish'd the following Letter, in which if I have not treated the Author of the Essay with my usual Candor, he may thank himself and this good-natur'd Town. For having observ'd with no little Astonishment, that Persons have been censur'd for ill Nature, who have attempted to display the Errors of Authors undeservedly successful; tho' they have done this with all imaginable Candor, and with the best and noblest Designs, which are the doing Justice, the Discovery of Truth, and the Improvement of Arts; while Writers of Lampoons and infamous Libels, whose Anonymous Authors have lain lurking in the dark, sometimes in Clubs, and sometimes solitary, like so many common Rogues and Footpads, to ruin the Fortunes, and murder the Reputations of others; have been caress'd and hugg'd by their thoughtless Applauders, and treated as if they had been the most vertuous and the best natur'd Men in the World; having observ'd all this with no little astonishment, I at last found out the reason of it, which is, because the Attempts of Libellers and Lampooners hurt only those whom they attack, and delight the rest of the Readers; whereas they who expose by a just Criticism the Absurdities of foolish fortunate Authors, attack all those who commend and admire those Authors, and disturb perhaps by opening their Eyes, no fewer than a thousand
Fops

PREFACE.

Fops in the good Opinion which they have conceiv'd of themselves. 'Tis for this Reason that I have endeavour'd to comply with this wise and good natur'd general Disposition of Minds, and to make amends for the Ill-nature of my Criticism, by the Allurements of my Satyr.

To

Lately Publish'd by Mr. Dennis,

THE Grounds of Criticism in Poetry, contain'd in some New Discoveries never made before, requisite for the writing and judging of Poems surely. Being a Preliminary to a larger Work, Entitled, A Criticism upon our most celebrated *English* Poets: Which will be publish'd in small Volumes.

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U

*To Mr. ----- at Sunning-Hill,
Berks.*

S I R,

I Here send you my Answer to the two Questions which I lately received from you, which are whether the Essay upon Criticism, which I lately sent you is like to take in Town, and who is the Author of that anonymous Rhapsody.

In answer to the first Question, my Opinion is that it will take very well. For the same thing is true of great Bodies of Men, which has been observ'd of particular Persons; and that is, that when Genius thinks fit to depart from among them, good Taste never cares to be very long after it. When the *Italian Opera* drove Poetry from out this Island, Criticism thought it a very great Impertinence for her to stay long behind. Besides that the elegant Translations of the *Italian Opera's*, which Mr. *Tonson* has published by the most eminent Hands, have prepared People to like any thing that is of an equal Merit with those Translations, and with *Tom Sternhold's* Version.

For the second *Quære*, Mr. — is of Opinion that this Essay was writ by some experienced judicious Person, who knows what Quantity of base Alloy is at this Juncture requisite to debase the Coin of *Parnassus*, and reduce it to the current Standard. But I am inclin'd to believe that it was writ by some young, or some raw Author, for the following Reasons.

First, He discovers in every Page a Sufficiency that is far beyond his little Ability; and hath rashly undertaken a Task which is infinitely above his Force; a Task that is only fit for the Author, with the just Encomium of whose Essay my Lord *Roscommon* begins his own.

B

Happy

*Happy that Author whose correct Essay
Repairs so well our old Horatian way.*

There is nothing more wrong, more low, or more incorrect than this Rhapsody upon Criticism. The Author all along taxes others with Faults of which he is more guilty himself. He tells us in the very two first Lines, that

*'Tis hard to say if greater want of Skill
Appear in writing, or in judging ill.*

Now whereas others have been at some Pains and Thought to shew each of these wants of Skill separately and distinctly, his comprehensive Soul hath most ingeniously contriv'd to shew them both in a supreme Degree together.

Secondly, While this little Author struts and affects the Dictatorian Air, he plainly shews that at the same time he is under the Rod; and that while he pretends to give Laws to others, he is himself a pedantick Slave to Authority and Opinion, of which I shall give some Instances.

In the beginning of his Essay he lays down this Maxim:

*Let such teach others who themselves excel;
And censure others who have written well.*

Where he would insinuate, that they alone are fit to be Criticks who have shewn themselves great Poets. And he brings in *Pliny* to confirm by his Authority the Truth of a Precept, which is denied by matter of Fact, and by the Experience of above Two thousand Years.

De Pictore, Sculptore, Fictore nisi Artifex judicare non potest.

It has been observed by Writers of Politicks, That they who have succeeded best in these kind of Writings, have never been either Governours of Provinces, or Ministers of State, as *Plato* and *Aristotle* in *Greece*, *Machiavel* in *Italy*, and in this Island *Harrington*. I will not say that this may be applied to Criticks. There are and have been very good ones who have been great Poets, as *Horace* in *Italy*, *Boileau* in *France*, and in *Great Britain* my Lord *Roscommon*, and a living noble Author. Nay I am fully convinc'd, that there never was an admirable Poet, but he was a great Critick. For what can be more absurd than to imagine, that any Man can excel in any Art, or Business, or Profession, who

does not understand that Profession, Art, or Business. Now he who understands the Art of Poetry is a Critick in Poetry. But this is undeniable at the same time, that there have been Criticks, who have been approv'd of by all the World, who never meddled with Poetry. Was *Aristotle* himself, the very Father of *Criticks*, a Poet? Why yes, 'tis pretended that there is a Fragment of an Ode, which was writ by him, remaining in *Athenæus*. But is that sufficient to denominate him a Poet? Did he ever write either Tragedy or Epick Poem? And yet how freely did he censure both Tragick and Epick Poets? *Dionysius Halicarnassæus*, and *Dionysius Longinus* among the *Greeks*, and *Quintilian* among the *Romans* were free Censurers, yet no Poets. And so are *Bossu* and *Dacier* at present among the *French*. And what is still more remarkable, is, that this young Author forgets himself to that degree, as to commend *Longinus* and *Quintilian* for accomplish'd Criticks contrary to his own Precept.

Another Instance which I shall give of his being a Slave to Authority and Opinion, is the servile Deference which he pays to the Ancients.

P. 13.

*Still Green with Bays each ancient Altar stands
Above the reach of sacrilegious Hands,
Secura from Flames, from Envy's fiercer Rage,
Destructive War, and all devouring Age.
See from each Clime the Learn'd their Incense bring,
Hear in all Tongues triumphant Pæans ring!
In Praise so just let ev'ry Voice be join'd,
And fill the general Chorus of Mankind.*

Which is just the opposite Extravagance and Extreme to that of Monsieur Perrault.

For the *French*-man with an insolent Stupidity contemn'd and blasphem'd, even those Hero's of Antiquity, whose Writings are admirable and Divine: This Essayer deifies Authors, whose Writings are but tolerable and indifferent. *Boileau*, as a reasonable Man, took the Path that lay in the middle of the two Extremes, as we shall see by what follows.

" For what remains, says he, I would not have any one think, that in this number of ancient Writers approv'd of by all Ages, 'tis my Intention to comprehend some Authors,

“ thors, who indeed are ancient, but who have only acquir’d
 “ a moderate Esteem, as *Lycophron*, *Nonnus*, *Silius Italicus*,
 “ and the Author of the Tragedies which are attributed to
 “ *Seneca*, to whom in my mind we may not only boldly com-
 “ pare, but justly prefer several of the modern Writers. I
 “ only admit into that exalted Rank that small number of
 “ admirable Writers, whose Name alone is their Panegyrick,
 “ as *Homer*, *Plato*, *Cicero*, *Virgil*, &c. And I do not regulate
 “ the Esteem which I have for them, by that length of Time
 “ which their Works have lasted, but by the number of Years
 “ which they have been admir’d; of which ’tis convenient to
 “ advertise a great many People, who otherwise perhaps
 “ might indiscreetly believe, what Monsieur *Perrault* has a
 “ mind to insinuate, that we commend the Ancients for no
 “ other Reason, but because they are Ancients; and blame
 “ the Moderns for no other Reason, but because they are
 “ Moderns; which is utterly false; since there are several
 “ among the Ancients whom we do not admire, and several
 “ among the Moderns whom all the World extols. The An-
 “ tiquity of a Writer is no certain proof of his Merit; but
 “ the ancient and constant Admiration which all the World
 “ has had for his Writings, is a certain and infallible proof
 “ that we ought to admire them. *Boileau* Reflect. the 7th
 “ on *Longinus*.

Thus hath *Boileau* determin’d this matter like a dextrous
 Distinguisher, and a most rightful Judge. If I may be al-
 low’d to speak my Sentiments after so great a Master, I
 must freely declare my Opinion, that of all the Poets a-
 mong the *Græcians*, I only admire *Homer*, *Sophocles*, *Pindar*,
 and *Euripides*, tho’ I am very much pleas’d with some of the
 rest; and of all the Poets among the *Romans*, I admire on-
 ly *Virgil* and *Horace*, and some parts of *Lucretius*; tho’ I
 am very much pleas’d with *Catullus*, *Tibullus*, *Terence*, and
 others. For as for *Lycophron*, *Nonnus*, *Apollonius Rhodius*,
Valerius Flaccus, *Silius Italicus*, *Statius*, I prefer the *Para-*
dise lost of *Milton* before them all together: Nay I will go
 yet farther, and declare, that tho’ I must freely own,
 that *Virgil* has infinitely the Advantage of *Milton*, in the
 wonderful Contrivance of his Poem, in the Harmony of
 his Versification, and in the constant Tenor of his Majesty,
 and his Elevation; yet that *Milton* in some particular parts
 of his Poem has the Advantage of *Virgil*, and of Mankind.

And

And tho' I can by no means believe *Shakespear* to be of equal Merit with *Sophocles* or *Euripides*, for which I shall give my Reasons in another place ; yet this I can say for the Honour of my Countryman, and of *Great Britain*, that there are several single Scenes in *Shakespear*, which I prefer to all the Tragedies put together of which *Seneca* is accounted the Author.

I shall give one more Instance, by which it will appear that while this Youngster is pretending to give Laws, he behaves himself like one who is still in awe of the Rod ; that he admires the Ancients, because his Master tells him that they must be admir'd ; and that if the Ancients were his Contemporaries, and produc'd the same Writings now which they did formerly, he would use them with the same Insolence with which he treats his Contemporaries. In the 8th Page of this Essay, he gives a verbose and indigested Encomium of the first *Gracian* Criticks, but forgets and contradicts himself before he comes to the bottom of that very Page. For, says he,

*The gen'rous Critick fann'd the Poet's Fire,
And taught the World with Reason to admire ;
Then Criticism, the Muses Handmaid, proud
To dress her Charms, and make her more belov'd :
But following Wits from that Intention stray'd,
Who could not win the Mistress, woo'd the Maid,
Set up themselves, and drove a sep'rate Trade.* }

Never was any thing more obscure and confus'd than the foregoing Rhimes ; but if there is any meaning in them, it must be that which follows.

At first Poets and Criticks were all one ; and these Poets made use of their Criticism only to make their Poetry more charming, and more accomplish'd. But the Wits who immediately follow'd after them, deviated from the Design of their Predecessors ; and not being able to attain to Poetry, took up a Resolution to drive a separate Trade, and to set up only for Criticks. If this is not his meaning, I should be glad to hear in Prose, and in plain *English* what his meaning is ; for Rhime has been always a wicked Abettor and Concealer of Nonsense. But if this is his meaning, then I desire to make these two Remarks, First, that the ancientest Criticks among the *Gracians* were not Poets,

Poets, as we observ'd before ; and Secondly, that if *Aristotle* and *Dionysius Halicarnassæus*, and others were now alive, and their excellent Criticisms were now first to appear, it would be objected to those great Men, in order to disqualify them for Criticks, that they were no Versifiers. And it is plain from the 2^d Page that another Objection would be made to them : For when he comes there to speak of the Moderns, he tells us,

*Some dryly plain, without Invention's Aid,
Write dull Receipts how Poems may be made.*

Now it being evident, that the Criticisms of *Aristotle* and of *Dionysius Halicarnassæus* are writ with a great deal of Simplicity, 'tis manifest that if those two Criticks had writ but yesterday, they would be accus'd to day of being drily plain, and of writing dull Receipts.

But a third infallible mark of a young Author, is, that he hath done in this Essay what School-boys do by their Exercises, he hath borrow'd both from Living and Dead, and particularly from the Authors of the two famous Essays upon Poetry and Translated Verse ; but so borrow'd, that he seems to have the very Reverse of *Midas's* noble Faculty. For as the courtest and the dullest Metals, were upon the touch of that *Lydian* Monarch immediately chang'd into fine Gold ; so the finest Gold upon this Author's handling, it, in a moment loses both its lustre and its weight, and is immediately turn'd to Lead.

A fourth thing that shews him a young man, is the not knowing his own mind, and his frequent Contradictions of himself. His Title seems to promise an Essay upon Criticism in general, which afterwards dwindles to an Essay upon Criticism in Poetry. And after all, he is all along giving Rules, such as they are, for Writing rather than Judging. In the beginning of the 8th Page the Rules are nothing but Nature.

*These Rules of old discover'd, not devis'd,
Are Nature still, but Nature methodiz'd.*

But no sooner is he come to the 10th Page, but the Rules and Nature are two different things.

When

*When first great Maro, in his boundless mind,
A Work t'outlast immortal Rome design'd,
Perhaps he seem'd above the Critick's Law,
And but from Nature's Fountains scorn'd to draw.*

But in the last Line of this very Paragraph they are the same things again.

*Learn hence for ancient Rules and just Esteem,
To copy Nature is to copy them.*

But to this he will answer, That he is guilty of no Contradiction, that he is only shewing that *Virgil* was guilty of Error and Ignorance; who first absurdly began to write his *Aeneis*, and afterwards sate down to learn the Rules of Writing; which when he began to write that Poem, he took to be things distinct from Nature; but that after he had wrote part of it, he fell to the reading of *Homer*, and that undeceiv'd him. That while he is talking of *Virgil's* Error and Ignorance, he is making a Parade of his own incomparable Wisdom and Knowledge; and not contradicting himself, but *Virgil*, or rather making him appear inconsistent with and contradicting himself: for that tho' *Virgil* took the Rules and Nature to be distinct from each other, for his own part he is wiser, and knows better things. Now is not this a very modest and a very judicious Gentleman?

A fifth Sign of his being a young Author is his being almost perpetually in the wrong. And here in relation to the foregoing passage, I might desire to ask him one or two civil Questions. First, who acquainted him with that noble Particularity of *Virgil's* Life, that he designed to write his *Aeneis* without Art? Had he it from ancient or modern Authors, or does he owe it to a noble Effort of his own sagacious Soul? If *Virgil* had so little Knowledge of the Rules of his own Art, and so very little true Judgment within him, as to be capable of such an Extravagance, an Extravagance which, says this Essayer, nothing but the reading of *Homer* was able to correct, how comes he so far to have surpass'd his Master in the admirable Contrivance of his Poem. But secondly, what does

does he mean by *Maro's* designing a Work to outlast immortal *Rome*? Does he pretend to put that Figure, call'd a Bull upon *Virgil*? Or would he ambitiously have it pass for his own? 'Tis no wonder that one who is capable of imputing so great an Extravagance to *Virgil*, should be capable of writing himself without any manner of meaning.

Whenever we find a Simile, the first Line of it is like a Warning-piece, to give us notice that something extraordinary false or foolish is to follow. We have one in the 6th Page, where the former and the latter part have not the least relation, and bear not the least proportion to one another.

*As on the Land while here the Ocean gains,
In other Parts it leaves wide sandy Plains:
Thus in the Soul while Memory prevails,
The solid Power of Understanding fails;
Where Beams of warm Imagination play,
The Memory's soft Figures melt away.*

Here the Soul in the third Verse is made to answer to Land in the first, and Memory to Ocean, which in the fourth Verse is chang'd for Understanding; tho' in this Simile the Author shews neither Memory nor Understanding; for there are as many Absurdities in it as there are Lines. At this rate a man may make a thousand Similes in an hour! Any thing may become like to any thing. *Jungentur jam Grypbes Equis.* But what a thoughtless Creature is this Essayer, to deny in these very Rhimes, by which he pretends to shew both Poetry and Criticism, the co-existence of those Qualities, without which 'tis impossible to be both Poet and Critick? Besides, how wrong is this; and how many Persons have I known who have had all these Qualities at the same time in a very great degree? What follows is more wrong and more absurd:

*One Science only will one Genius fit,
So vast is Art, so narrow Human Wit.*

Is not this a rare Pretender to Poetry and Criticism, who talks at this rate, when all the World knows that 'tis impossible for a Man with only one Science to be either Poet or Critick? Which is so much the more unlucky, because the very Fathers of Poetry and Criticism *Homer* and *Aristotle*, whom he mentions so often in this Essay, are believed to have had all the Sciences. 'Tis now between Two and three thousand Years since *Aristotle* wrote his *Morals*, his *Politicks*, his *Rhetorick*, and his *Poetick*; and three of these are the very best in their kinds to this very day, and have infinitely the Advantage of all those several thousand Treatises that have been writ since. What follows is still more false and more abominable.

*Not only bounded to peculiar Arts,
But ev'n in those confin'd to single Parts.*

What a wretched narrow Soul hath this Essayer? And what a thoughtless one — when *Homer*, whom he mentions so often in this Essay, had as admirable a Talent for Pleasantry, as he had a Genius equal to the most exalted Poetry? To come to the *Romans*, *Horace* is famous both for Elevation and Pleasantry. *Virgil* succeeded in his *Bucolicks* and *Georgicks*, as well as he did in his *Æneis*. To descend to the *Moderns*, *Shakespear* had a very good Genius for Tragedy, and a very good Talent for Comedy. And since him *Otway* had likewise a Talent for both.

But in the next Page there is likewise a Simile; and therefore we may be sure, as we observ'd above, that most of that Page is one continued Absurdity. P. 7.

*First follow Nature, and your Judgment frame
By her just Standard, which is still the same;
Unerring Nature still divinely bright,
One clear, unchang'd, and universal Light,
Life, Force and Beauty next to all impart,
At once the Source, and End, and Test of Art:*

Now here wou'd I fain ask one or two Questions? Is he giving Rules here for Judging or for Writing? And is he prescribing those Rules to the Knowing or the Ignorant?

norant? If he says to the Knowing, what is it that he tells them here? That they must judge according to Nature, or write according to Nature. Now does he tell them any thing in this that they did not know before? Well, but he says, he is laying down these Rules for the Ignorant; why then I humbly conceive that he ought to have told them what he means by Nature, and what it is to write or to judge according to Nature. For by expressing himself at the rate that he does, he neither says any thing to the Learned which they did not know before, nor any thing to the Ignorant which they can possibly understand. Horace proceeded in a very different Method from this, when he was to acquaint the Piso's what was the principal Source of good Writing, he not only told them that it was moral Philosophy,

Scribendi recte, sapere est & principium & Fons,

But pointed to the very Books where they might find that moral Philosophy,

Rem tibi Socratica poterant ostendere Chartæ.

So that in one we have a clear and perspicuous Precept, and in the other an obscure and unintelligible Jargon. But let us go on.

*That Art is best which most resembles her,
Which still presides, yet never does appear.*

That is, as much as to say, *Artis est celare artem*, the common Subject that Pedants give their Boys to make Themes and Declamations upon. Is not this a noble Discovery? Well but now for the Simile;

*In some fair Body thus the sprightly Soul
With Spirit feeds, with Vigor fills the whole,
Each motion guides, and ev'ry nerve sustains,
It self unseen but in th' effects remains.*

This Youngster has not memory enough to know what he said six Lines before;

*Thus in a Soul where memory ne'r prevails,
The solid Power of understanding fails.*

In the fifth Line of this Page it was Nature that

Life, force and beauty must to all impart.

And here in the 10th we are told that 'tis Art that

With Spirit feeds, with Vigor fills the whole.

But how absurdly is Art compar'd to the Soul, to which only Genius can be justly compar'd, according to the Observation in the Essay upon Poetry. But let us go on, and we shall find that as all that went before this Simile is unintelligible, so all is mighty absurd that follows it.

*There are whom Heav'n hath bless'd with store of Wit,
Yet want as much again to manage it.*

By the way what rare Numbers are here? Would not one swear that this Youngster had espous'd some antiquated Muse, who had sued out a Divorce upon the account of Impotence from some superannuated Sinner; and who having been pox'd by her former Spouse, has got the Gout in her decrepit Age, which makes her hobble so damnably — Why, this is more dismal than the Italian Opera, both that and the Essay are but sounds; but that is Harmony, and this is Discord.

But now, my dear Friend, if I had young Mr. Bays here, I would desire that I might ask him one Question, and he not be angry. And that is, what he means by

*There are whom Heav'n has bless'd with store of Wit,
Yet want as much again to manage it.*

But let us go on, and see if 'tis possible to find it out without him.

*For Wit and Judgment ever are at strife,
Tho' meant each others, are like Man and Wife.*

That is as much as to say, there are People who have that which they call Wit, without one dram of Judgment. Is not this another wonderful Discovery? But I fancy that Mr. Bays has the Misfortune to be wrong in the first Verse of the fore said Couplet.

For Wit and Judgment ever are at strife.

What a Devil, Mr. Bays, they cannot be at strife sure, after they are parted, after Wit has made an Elopement, or has been barbarously forsaken by Judgment, or turn'd to separate maintenance! Much less can they be at strife where they never came together, which is the Case in the Essay. But now we talk of Man and Wife, let us consider the Yoke-fellow to the former Rhime.

Tho' meant each others, and like Man and Wife.

Now cannot I for my Soul conceive the reciprocal Aid that there is between Wit and Judgment. For tho' I can easily conceive how Judgment may keep Wit in her Senses, yet cannot I possibly understand how Wit can controul, or redress, or be a help to Judgment.

If Mr. Bays in that Couplet

*There are whom Heav'n has bless'd with store of Wit,
Yet want as much agen to manage it.*

Intended to say that People have sometimes store of false Wit without Judgment to manage it, he intended nothing but what all the World knew before. But if he meant to say this of true Wit, nothing can be more mistaken; for I cannot conceive how any one can have store of Wit without Judgment. I believe that Father Bouheurs has given a tolerable Description of Wit in his Treatise upon that Subject, *C'est un solide qui brille*: "Tis a shining Solid, like
" a Diamond, which the more solid it is, is always the more
" glittering; and derives its height of Lustre from its perfect Solidity. Now how any thing in the Works of the Mind can be solid without Judgment, I leave Mr. Bays to consider.

But

But let us pass to the 18th Page, at the bottom of which we shall find another Simile, and consequently another Absurdity.

*Poets, like Painters, thus unskill'd to trace
The naked Nature and the living Grace,
With Gold and Jewels cover every part,
And hide with Ornament their want of Art.*

Which in Prose and plain English runs thus :

Poets like Painters not having the Skill to draw Nature without Art, hide their want of Art with a Superabundance of Art.

In the 20th Page we have another Simile, and consequently another Absurdity.

*But true Expression, like th' unchanging Sun,
Clears and improves whate'er it shines upon.*

Which is borrow'd from the Essay on Poetry.

True Wit is everlasting like the Sun,

But awkwardly borrow'd, and utterly spoil'd in the removal. For what can Expression be properly said to shine upon? True Wit, or Genius; for that the noble Author means, as is plain from several parts of his Poem, shines thro' and discovers it self by the Expression; but Expression, at the very best, can but shine with a borrow'd Light; like the Moon and the rest of the Planets, whereas Genius shines and flames with its own Celestial Fire.

His Instructions, his Assertions, his Commendations, his Censures, his Advice, wherever they are his own, are either false or trivial, or both. Such is that in the beginning of the twelfth Page,

*And tho' the Ancients thus their Rules invade,
As Kings dispense with Laws themselves have made.
Moderns beware,*

Thus

But

Thus is this Effayer for a double Dispensing Power in Kings and ancient Authors, and is for making the Moderns doubly Slaves, Slaves in their Actions, and Slaves in their Writings. But as we boldly deny that Kings have either Power to make Laws, or to dispense with them after they are made; so those Laws of Writing were neither made by the Ancients, nor can those Ancients dispense with them. As they are the Laws of Nature, and not of Men, as he has himself hinted in the beginning of the 3^d Page.

*Those Rules of old discover'd, not devis'd,
Are Nature still, but Nature methodiz'd.*

They are eternal and irrevocable, and never to be dispens'd with but by Nature that made them; and the only Rule for that Dispensation is this, that a less Law may be violated to avoid the infringing of a greater; and 'tis equally the Duty both of Ancients and Moderns, to break thro' a less important Rule, when without that Infringement a greater must be violated, or the great End of all the Rules neglected. The great End of all the Rules is to instruct, and the subordinate End is to please, by moving of Passion, and particularly that kind of Passion which ought chiefly to reign in that sort of Poetry in which the Poet writes. Now 'tis a Rule in Poetry, that the notorious Events of History are not to be falsified, nor the Periods of Time transpos'd or confounded. And yet *Virgil* in the fourth of his *Aeneis*, broke thro' this Rule at once by a bold and a judicious Anachronism; in order to make his Poem more admirable, and the more to exalt the Glory of the Roman Name. Whatever the Ancients justly did, the Moderns may justly do. 'Tis ridiculous and pedantick to imagine, that the natural Powers of the Soul were stronger or more excellent in the Ancients than they are in the Moderns. And as to Experience we have vastly the Advantage of them. When we consider Experience, as my Lord *Bacon* observes, we are properly the Ancients, who live in the elder Ages of the World, and have the Advantage of the Knowledge of Three thousand Years over the first Writers. Not but that at the same time that I assert the Equality of Faculties in the Moderns, and

and the Advantage of their Experience, I freely acknowledge the actual Preheminence that several of the Ancients have over the Moderns; but I have sufficiently shewn in the *Advancement of Modern Poetry*, that that actual Preheminence proceeded from accidental Causes, and not from any Superiority of Faculties in those ancient Authors.

At the bottom of the same Page 12. there is something asserted that is both false and impudent; where speaking of the Ancients, he tells us,

*Those are but Stratagems which Errors seem,
Nor is it Homer nods but we that dream.*

Which is a presumptuous Contradiction of Horace,

Aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus.

And of my Lord Roscommon,

His reeling Hero's, and his wounded Gods

Make some suspect he snores as well as nods.

And is in effect to declare that Horace was a Dreamer, and my Lord Roscommon a Dotard, and I, my Masters, only I, am alerte and euillè, only I am the man of importance.

In the beginning of the 21st Page there is something too very wrong.

In Words as Fashions the same Rule will hold,

Alike fantastick if too new or old,

Be not the first by whom the new are try'd,

Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.

This being directed to all without Exception, and deliver'd without Limitation or Restriction, is another flat Contradiction of Horace.

Si forte necesse est

Indiciis monstrare recentibus abdita rerum

Fingere cinctutis non exaudita Cethegis

Continget, dabiturq; licentia sumpta pudenter.

Et

*Et nova fissaq; nuper habebunt verba fidem, si
Græco fonte cadant parce detorta.*

This is likewise a Libel upon the memory of Mr. Dryden whom he pretends to admire; for never any one was a greater Corner than he, and it is directly contrary to the Improvement of Languages; for if *Chaucer* and succeeding Authors had had this Advice given them, and had been weak enough to take it, how could our Language ever have improv'd in Purity, in Force, in Grace, or in Harmony? But if it was allow'd to *Chaucer*, and those who immediately follow'd him, why must it be deny'd to those who have liv'd since.

quid autem
Cæcilio, Plautoq; dabit Romanus ademptum
Virgilio, Varroque? Ego cur acquirere pauca
Si possim, invidior? Quum lingua Catonis & Enni,
Sermonem patrium ditaverit, & nova rerum
Nomina protulerit, licuit semperq; licebit
Signatum præsentè nota præcludere nomen.

I must confess if we speak with relation to the constant and general Practice of a Writer, he ought to take what the French call the best Use, for the Mistress of the Language in which he writes; but a great Poet if he writes in the Language which he was born to speak, may be allow'd the Privilege sometimes to coin new words, and sometimes to revive the old, which last succeeded so well to *Milton*.

About the middle of the 22^d Page he gives Advice, which shews him very inconsistent with himself.

And praise the easie Vigor of a Line,
Where Denham's Strength and Waller's Sweetness join.

How vastly different is this from what he pretends to advise at the bottom of the 9th Page.

Be Homer's Works your Study day and night,
Read them by day, and meditate by night;

Thence

*Thence form your Judgment, thence your Notions bring;
And trace the Muses upward to their Spring;
Still with it self compar'd, his Text peruse,
And let your Comment be the Mantuan Muse.*

Now he who is familiar with *Homer*, and intimate with *Virgil*, will not be extremely affected either with the Sweetness of *Waller*, or the Force of *Denham*. He requires something that is far above the Level of modern Authors, something that is great and wonderful. If I were to recommend a *British* Poet to one who has been habituated to *Homer* and *Virgil*, I would for the Honour of my Country, and of my own Judgment advise him to read *Milton*; who very often equals both the *Græcian* and the *Roman* in their extraordinary Qualities, and sometimes surpasses them, is more lofty, more terrible, more vehement, more astonishing, and has more impetuous and more divine Raptures. I will not deny but that *Waller* has Sweetness, and *Denham* Force; but their good and their shining Qualities are so sophisticated and debauch'd with these modern Vices of Conceit, and Point, and Turn, and Epigram, that 'tis impossible they can affect in an extraordinary manner those who have been long acquainted with the Ancients.

There is in the 38th and the 39th Pages another Inconsistency, which I desire to lay before the Reader. In the 38th Page he speaks of *Horace* thus:

*He who supreme in Judgment as in Wit,
Might boldly censure as he boldly writ;
Yet judg'd with Coolness, tho' he sung with Fire
His Precepts teach but what his Works inspire.
Our Criticks take a contrary Extreme,
They judge with Fury, but they write with Flegm.*

Before he goes ten Lines farther, he forgets himself, and commends *Longinus* for the very contrary Quality for which he commended *Horace*, and for the very same thing for which he condemns his Contemporaries.

*The Muses sure Longinus did inspire,
And blest their Critick with a Poet's Fire:*

*An ardent Judge that zealous in his Trust
With warmth gives Judgment, yet is always just;
Whose own Example strengthens all his Laws,
And is himself that great Sublime he draws.*

He commends *Horace* for judging coolly in Verse, and extols *Longinus* for criticizing with Fire in Prose. What a miserable Slave is this Author to Opinion? Can any thing be more plain, than that he condemns his Contemporaries for no other reason but because they are his Contemporaries; and commends *Longinus* for no other reason but because he has been approv'd of by others. For why should not a modern Critick imitate the great Qualities of *Longinus*; and when he treats of a Subject which is sublime, treat of it sublimely? Now he who writes any thing with Sublimity, let it be Prose or Verse, let it be Criticism or Poetry, writes sometimes with Fury, as *Longinus* hath shewn both by his Doctrine and his Example in the first Chapter of his Treatise.

But pray who are these Moderns that judge with Fury, and write with Flegm? Who are they that have writ both Criticism and Poetry, who have not in their Poetry shewn a thousand times this Essayer's Fire? Who is there among them that is not above borrowing so openly and so awkwardly from the most known Authors? For what Reader is so unacquainted with our *English* Poetry, as not to know that he has taken this last Couplet, with a very little variation from the Essay on Translated Verse?

*Thus make the proper Use of each Extreme,
And write with Fury, but correct with Flegm.*

But what is a perspicuous sensible Precept in my Lord Roscommon, as soon as this Essayer handles it, becomes a gross Absurdity and a palpable Contradiction.

In the 28th Page there are no less than two or three Absurdities in the compass of four Lines.

*Now length of Fame our second Life is lost,
And bare Threescore is all ev'n that can boast.*

*Our Sons their Fathers failing Language see,
And such as Chaucer is shall Dryden be.*

Now what does young Mr. Bays mean by our *second Life*, and by *bare Threescore*? If he speaks of himself, and means threescore Days, he means too much in Reason: But if he speaks of *Chaucer*, *Spencer*, and *Shakespear*, and means threescore Years, he means too little in Conscience. 'Tis now a hundred Years since *Shakespear* began to write, more since *Spencer* flourished, and above 300 Years since *Chaucer* died. And yet the Fame of none of these is extinguish'd. The Reason that he gives for this is false too.

Our Sons their Fathers failing Language see,

Mr. Waller may suffice to shew the Falsity of this. 'Tis above threescore Years since that Gentleman began to write, and yet his Language is still good and new. Thus we find that the Assertion is false here, the Reason of it false; and we shall find anon that the Inference is false too.

And such as Chaucer is shall Dryden be;

That is, shall grow obsolete and neglected, and be either forgot, or be read but by a few.

Whether the Language of Mr. Dryden will ever be as obsolete as is at present that of *Chaucer*, is what neither this Author nor any one else can tell. For ev'ry Language hath its particular period of Time to bring it to Perfection, I mean to all the Perfection of which that Language is capable. And they who are alive cannot possibly tell whether that period hath happen'd or not; If that period has not yet happen'd; yet 'tis not the Obsolescence of Language which makes a Poet fall from the Reputation which he once enjoy'd, provided the Language in which that Poet wrote was at the Time of his Writing come to be capable of Harmony. For *Spencer* is obsolete, yet is still renown'd. That which makes an Author fall from his former Reputation, is, says *Boileau*, in his seventh Reflection upon *Longinus*, his not having

having attain'd to that Point of Solidity and Perfection, which are necessary to give a never dying Esteem to his Works. For Example, says he, the Latin Tongue in which *Cicero* and *Virgil* wrote, was already very much alter'd in the Time of *Quintilian* and of *Aulus Gellius*; and yet *Cicero* and *Virgil* were more esteem'd when those Criticks wrote, than they were in their own Age, because they had as it were by their Writings fix'd the *Roman* Language, having attain'd to that Point of Solidity and Perfection which I have mention'd above.

If we reflect upon that miserable Taſt which reigns now among our Readers, and that want of Genius which is ſo deplorable in our preſent Writers, and that Taſt and Genius daily more and more decline, we may without being Prophets foretel, according to the foremention'd Obſervation of the Solidity and Perfection of Poems, that the Language is not like to alter to the Diſadvantage of thoſe Poets, whoſe Works are the only Remains of them here below. But be that as it will, yet this is certain, that Mr. *Dryden* had one Quality in his Language, which *Chaucer* had not, and which muſt always remain. For having acquir'd ſome Juſtneſs of Numbers, and ſome Truth of Harmony and of Verſification, to which *Chaucer* thro' the Rudeneſs of the Language, or want of Ear, or want of Experience, or rather perhaps a mixture of all, could not poſſibly attain, that Juſtneſs of Numbers, and Truth of Harmony and of Verſification can never be deſtroy'd by any alteration of Language; and therefore Mr. *Dryden* whatever alteration happens to the Language, can never be like to *Chaucer*.

Wherever this Gentleman talks of Wit, he is ſure to ſay ſomething that is very fooliſh, as Page 29.

*What is this Wit that does our Cares employ,
The Owner's Wife that other Men enjoy?
The more his Trouble as the more admir'd,
Where wanted ſcorn'd, and envy'd where acquir'd.*

Here again I deſire leave to aſk two or three Queſtions. Firſt, how can Wit be ſcorn'd where it is not? Is not this a Figure frequently employ'd in *Hibernian* Land?

Land? The Person who wants this Wit may indeed be scorn'd; but such a Contempt declares the Honour that the Contemner has for Wit. But secondly, what does he mean by acquir'd Wit? Does he mean Genius by the word Wit, or Conceit and Point? If he means Genius, that is certainly never to be acquir'd; and the Person who should pretend to acquire it, would be always secure from Envy. But if by Wit he means Conceit and Point, those are things that ought never to be in Poetry, unless by chance sometimes in the Epigram, or in Comedy, where it is proper to the Character and the Occasion; and ev'n in Comedy it ought always to give place to Humour, and ev'n to be lost and absorb'd in that, according to the Precept of the noble Author of the *Essay on Poetry*.

*That silly thing Men call sheer Wit avoid,
With which our Age so nauseously is cloy'd;
Humour is all, Wit should be only brought
To turn agreeably some proper Thought.*

In the beginning of the 33^d Page there is a Couplet of Advice, the first line of which is very impertinent, and the second very wrong.

Be silent always when you doubt your Sense.

Now who are the Persons to whom he is giving Advice here? Why, to Poets or Criticks, or both; but the Persons to whom he ought to be speaking are Criticks, that is, People who pretend to instruct others. But can any man of common Sense want to be told, that he ought not to pretend to instruct others, as long as he doubts of the Truth of his own Precepts?

But what can be more wrong or more absurd than the latter Verse of the Couplet?

Speak when you're sure, yet speak with Diffidence.

Now I should think that when a man is sure, 'tis his Duty to speak with a modest Assurance; since in doing otherwise he betrays the Truth, especially when he speaks

speaks to those who are guided more by Imagination than they are by Judgment, which is the Case of three parts of the World, and three parts of the other Part.

He is so great a Lover of Fallhood, that whenever he has a mind to calumniate his Contemporaries, he upbraids them with some Defect, which is just contrary to some good Quality for which all their Friends and their Acquaintance commend them. As for Example, if a Man is remarkable for the extraordinary Deference which he pays to the Opinions and the Remonstrances of his Friends, him he Libels for his Impatience under Reproof. On the contrary, if he has a mind to extol the Ancients, he passes by either thro' Envy or Ignorance all the great Qualities which they have, and extols them for some peculiar one, the very want of which is known to all the World to be their Infirmary and their Defect. Thus in the 37th Page he takes occasion to commend *Aristotle* for what he wrote in *Physicks*, a great deal of which is so justly censur'd and condemn'd ev'n by the same learned and judicious Men, who allow his *Ethicks*, his *Politicks*, his *Rhetorick*, and his *Poetick*, to be worthy of the greatest Philosopher. And here as the Commendation which he gives him is false, the manner of giving it is still more false. For, says he,

*Not only Nature did his Laws obey,
But Fancy's boundless Empire own'd his Sway,*

The Expression in the first Verse is not only absurd, but blasphemous. The Laws of Nature are unalterable and indispensable but by God himself; and the greatest Excellence to which the wisest Philosopher can attain, is not to controul, but to obey Nature.

In the Libel upon King *Charles* the Second, he has not only endeavour'd to brand the Memory of that Prince for something which is utterly false, but for something which if it had been true had been an Excellence in that Prince. For *Wits*, says he, in that Monarch's Reign had Pensions, when all the World knows that it was one of the Faults of that Reign that none of

of the politer Arts were then encourag'd. For of this we may be sure, that whenever we have a Prince and Ministers, who truly understand either their own Interest, or that of the Publick, Arts and Learning will be then encourag'd; I mean not speciously and pretendedly, but really and sincerely.

The King of *France* pretended to encourage Arts by allowing Pensions to some few Professors of them, whereas at the same time he was and is doing a thing, which has a natural Tendency to the driving them out of *Europe*. For by kindling and prosecuting an unjust War thro' so many different Nations, he has gone a very great way towards the barbarizing the Christian World; and the Arts would have been at a much greater height, than they are now, without any manner of Encouragement from him, if they had been suffer'd to have enjoy'd the Quiet of an universal Peace. In the same manner some Persons of Quality in *Great Britain* have been kind to some particular Professors of Poetry; but at the very same time, by not only introducing the *Italian* Opera among us, but by continuing constant Encouragers of it to this very day, they are doing a thing which will drive the very Art it self out of the Kingdom, as it has been already driven out of every other Nation; and are depriving their Favourite Authors of more than ever they yet bestow'd upon them. Any great Minister would now have a glorious Opportunity of being a true Encourager of Poetry, and ev'ry other generous Art, by representing effectually to her Majesty the Mischief that the *Italians* do both to her Subjects, and to the Arts, and so driving those melodious Ballad-Singers out of the Nation.

But to return to the Reign of King *Charles* the Second, from which I may seem to have in some measure digress'd; there was then indeed a favourable regard shewn to Wit, but no real Encouragement. *Butler* was starv'd at the same time that the King had his Book in his Pocket. Another great Wit lay seven Years in Prison for an inconsiderable Debt, and *Otway* dar'd not to shew his Head for fear of the same Fate. These are some of the Glories of that Reign according to this Author. For if it be a Vice in a Prince to encourage an Art, 'tis a Virtue

to neglect it. What a wretched Creature is this Pretender to Criticism and Poetry to keep such a pother about an Art, the Encouragement of which he imputes as Infamy to King *Charles* the Second?

Well ! but he tells us that not only

The Wits had Pensions, but young Lords had Wit.

Here in the compass of one poor Line are two devilish Bobs for the Court. But 'tis no easy matter to tell which way the latter squinting Reflection looks. For if he pretends to reflect upon that Prince, for receiving Persons of Quality who had Wit into his Court, can any thing be more impertinent than twice in one Line to libel a Monarch for being favourable to that very thing, which he takes so much pains in this very Book to recommend to the World? If he means that the young Lords of the Court who pretended to Wit had it not, can any thing be more arrogant than to fly in the Face of all Mankind, and to contradict almost the only thing in which all sorts of People agree, ev'n in this divided Age, *Britons* and *Foreigners*, *Protestants* and *Papists*, *Whigs* and *Tories*, *Churchmen* and *Dissenters*, and to pretend to reflect upon Persons whose very Names are their Panegyrics? The young Lords who had Wit in the Court of King *Charles* the Second, are these: The young former Duke of *Buckingham*, the young Earl of *Mulgrave* now Duke of *Buckingham*, the young Lord *Buckhurst* afterwards Earl of *Dorset* and *Middlesex*, and the young Marquess of *Halifax*; the young Earl of *Rocheſter*, the young Lord *Vaughan* now Lord *Carbury*, and several others. If the looking favourably upon young Persons of Quality who had Wit, may be imputed as Scandal to the Court of King *Charles* the Second, that Court was certainly the most scandalous one in *Europe*. But if he says on the other side that 'tis dishonourable to a Prince to be mistaken in this Point, and to look with a favourable Eye on Pretenders instead of real Masters; to that all the World with one accord will answer that never Prince had a clearer Reputation in this Point.

Thus are his Assertions, and his Precepts frequently false or trivial, or both, his Thoughts very often crude and abortive, his Expressions absurd, his Numbers often harsh
and

and unmusical, without Cadence and without Variety, his Rhimes trivial and common. He dictates perpetually, and pretends to give Law without any thing of the Simplicity or Majesty of a Legislator, and pronounces Sentence without any thing of the Plainness or Clearness, or Gravity of a Judge. Instead of Simplicity we have little Conceit and Epigram, and Affectation. Instead of Majesty we have something that is very mean, and instead of Gravity we have something that is very boyish. And instead of Perspicuity and lucid Order, we have but too often Obscurity and Confusion.

But what most shews him a very young Author, is, that with all these Faults and this Weakness he has the Insolence of a Hero, and is a downright Bully of *Parnassus*, who is ev'ry moment thund'ring out Fool, Sot, Fop, Coxcomb, Blockhead, and thinks to hide his want of Sense by his pretended Contempt of others, as a Hector does his want of Courage by his perpetual blustering and roaring; and is sagaciously of Opinion, that he arrogates so much Sense to himself as he imputes Folly to other People.

*Thus a wild Tartar when he spies
A Man that's handsome, valiant, wise,
Thinks if he kills him to inherit
His Wit, his Beauty, and his Spirit,
As if just so much he enjoy'd
As in another he destroy'd.*

By what he says Page the 25th, and his returning to the Charge, Page 34, his particular Pique seems to be at People of Quality, for whom he appears to have a very great Contempt, I mean for the Authors of that Rank; as if a Man were to assert his Title to *Parnassus*, by proving himself a Plebeian in *Great Britain*; or as if an *English* Sovereign by making a Man honourable, made him dull. Good Gods, how absolute would our Princes be at that rate! when they would have the very Understandings of their Subjects at their disposal, and would need only to prefer the Disobedient to chastise them.

I hope, I may without offence, gently put young Mr. Bays in mind, that the Subordination which is absolutely necessary to the Government of the World requires

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that Respect should be paid to Persons of Quality, ev'n where Esteem cannot be paid to them; but that in this case they both may and ought to have our Respect and Esteem together. For I know very few People of Quality who have applied themselves to Poetry, who have not succeeded; on the other side 'tis known to all the World that some of them have been admirable. For nothing is more certain than that supposing equal Talent and equal Application, a Man of Quality has great Advantages over the rest of Men. But can any thing be more stupidly impudent and impertinent, than that this little Gentleman should rail thus at the Writings of People of Quality in this very Essay, the one half of which he has borrow'd from two noble Authors, and appropriated it to himself, by the same Method by which a Jack-pudding engrosses a Sack-possiet, viz. by mingling some Beastliness with it, which does not fail to render it nauseous to those who made it. This extraordinary Proceeding of borrowing and railing puts me in mind of a Passage in Mr. Comely.

*'Tis now become the frugal Fashion
Rather to hide than pay the Obligation;
Nay Wrongs and Outrages we do,
Lest Men should think we Owe.*

But the Men of Quality, as they want not the Discernment, will have the Satisfaction to see, that as there is a great deal of Venom in this little Gentleman's Temper, Nature has very wisely corrected it with a great deal of Dulness.

*His rankest Libels lull asleep his Foes,
As Vipers blood in Treacle makes us dose.*

As there is no Creature in Nature so venomous, there is nothing so stupid and so impotent as a hunch-back'd Toad; and a Man must be very quiet and very passive, and stand still to let him fasten his Teeth and his Claws, or be surpriz'd sleeping by him, before that Animal can have any power to hurt him.

Thus in order to find out his outward Person, have we taken a Survey of his inward Man, in his several noble Tal-

a hunchbacked Toad with teeth & claws

ents and Vertues, his Poetry, his Criticism, his Modesty, his Humility, his Gratitude, and his good Breeding. Let us now take a Survey of his Politicks, and his Religion, not by any means by way of Reflection; for Poetry and Criticism are of no Party, and of no Religion, but only to find who he is.

I find then that in the compass of one Page, which is the thirty first, he has Libell'd two Monarchs and two Nations. The two Monarchs are King *Charles* and King *William*: The two Nations are the *Dutch* and our own. The *Dutch* we are told are a parcel of Sharpers, and we are downright Bubbles and Fools. King *Charles* the Second was too much a Libertine, and too much an Encourager of Wit for him; King *William* the Third was too much a *Socinian*. But tho' he has without Mercy condemn'd the Reigns of the foremention'd Monarchs, he is graciously pleas'd to pass over in silence that which comes between them. In the beginning of the 12th Page, we find what that is which so happily reconcil'd him to it, and that was the Dispensing Pow'r, which was set on foot in order to introduce and to establish Popery, and to make it the National Religion. Now I humbly conceive that he who Libels our Confederates, must be by Politicks a *Jacobite*; and he who Libels all the Protestant Kings that we have had in this Island these threescore Years, and who justifies the Dispensing Pow'r so long after we are free'd from it, a Pow'r which as was hinted above was set on foot on purpose to introduce Popery: He who justifies this when he lyes under the Tye of no Necessity, nor ev'n Conveniency to approve of it, must, I humbly conceive, derive his Religion from St. *Omer's*, as he seems to have done his Humanity and his Criticism; and is, I suppose, politickly setting up for Poet-Laureat against the coming over of the Pretender, which by his Insolence he seems to believe approaching, as People of his Capacity are generally very sanguine.

Let us now see if we can find any thing in his Rhimes, which may direct us to his Coffee-house, or to his Booksellers. By his taking three Opportunities to commend Mr. *Dryden*, in so small a compass as p. 23, 27, 28, I fancy we may hear of him at *Shakespeare's* Head, or at *Will's*, for to revive old Quarrels which

have been long out of doors, and to renew the memory of Poetical Wars wag'd formerly between Sir R. B. Mr. L. M. and Mr. Dryden, can be agreeable to none but a very few of the Frequenters of those Places. This is to run counter to his own Direction; for he tells us Page 27. that formerly

*Pride, Malice, Folly against Dryden rose
In various shapes of Parsons, Criticks, Beaus.*

Upon which, Page 28, he gives this grave Advice,

*Be thou the first true Merit to befriend,
His Praise is lost who stays till all commend.*

The appearing in Mr. Dryden's behalf now is too late. 'Tis like offering a Man's self for a Second, after the Principal has been whipp'd through the Lungs. Now Mr. Dryden is dead, he commends him with the rest of the World. But if this little Gentleman had been his Contemporary thirty Years ago, why then I can tell a very damn'd shape that Pride and Malice, and Folly would have appear'd in against Mr. Dryden.

For his Acquaintance he names Mr. Walsh. I had the good Fortune to know Mr. Walsh very well; who was a learned, candid, judicious Gentleman. But he had by no means the Qualification which this Author reckons absolutely necessary to a Critick; it being certain that Mr. Walsh was like this Essayer a very indifferent Poet; but he was a Man of a very good Understanding, in spite of his being a Beau. He lov'd to be well dress'd, as *Dorimant* says, and thought it no Disparagement to his Understanding; and I remember a little young Gentleman, with all the Qualifications which we have found to be in this Author, whom Mr. Walsh us'd sometimes to take in to his Company as a double Foil to his Person, and his Capacity. It has been observ'd that of late Years a certain Spectre exactly in the shape of that little Gentleman, has haunted a certain ancient Wit, and has been by the People of *Covent-Garden* styl'd his evil Genius. For it hath been extremely remarkable, that while that Spectre hath haunted that ancient Wit, he has never been able to write

or

or talk like himself: Which has by no means happen'd by any Decay of his natural Parts, but by the wonderful Pow'r of Magick. For as soon as the dumb Conjuror has been employ'd to lay the Spectre for three or four months, either in the midst of the *Red Sea*, or the middle of *Windsor-Forest*, the old Gentleman has strait been his own Man as perfectly as ever he was in his Life.

And now if you have a mind to enquire between *Sunning-Hill* and *Ockingham*, for a young, squab, short Gentleman, with the forementioned Qualifications, an eternal Writer of Amorous Pastoral Madrigals, and the very Bow of the God of Love, you will be soon directed to him. And pray as soon as you have taken a Survey of him, tell me whether he is a proper Author to make personal Reflections on others; and tell him if he does not like my Person, 'tis because he is an ungrateful Creature, since his Conscience tells him, that I have been always infinitely delighted with his: So delighted, that I have lately drawn a very graphical Picture of it; but I believe I shall keep the *Dutch Piece* from ever seeing the Light, as a certain old Gentleman in *Windsor-Forest* would have done by the Original, if he durst have been half as impartial to his own Draught as I have been to mine. This little Author, may extol the Ancients as much and as long as he pleases, but he has reason to thank the good Gods that he was born a Modern. For had he been born of *Gracian* Parents, and his Father by consequence had by Law had the absolute Disposal of him, his Life had been no longer than that of one of his Poems, the Life of half a day. Instead of setting his Picture to show, I have taken a keener Revenge, and expos'd his Intellectuals, as duly considering that let the Person of a Gentleman of his Parts be never so contemptible, his inward Man is ten times more ridiculous; it being impossible that his outward Form, tho' it should be that of downright Monkey, should differ so much from human Shape, as his immaterial unthinking part does from human Understanding. How agreeable it is to be in a Libel with so much good Company as I have been, with two great Monarchs, two mighty Nations, and especially the People of Quality of *Great Britain*, and this Libel compos'd by a little Gentleman, who has writ a Panegyrick upon himself! Which Panegyrick

rick if it was not writ with Judgment, yet was it publish'd with Discretion, for it was publish'd in Mr. W——'s Name; so that by this wise Proceeding he had the Benefit of the Encomium, and Mr. W—— had the Scandal of the Poetry; which it brought upon him to such a degree, that 'tis ten to one if ever he recovers the Reputation of a good Versifier. And thus for the present I take my leave of you and of this little Critick and his Book; a Book throughout which Folly and Ignorance, those Brethren so lame and so impotent, do ridiculouſly at one and the same time look very big and very dull, and strut, and hobble cheek by jowl with their Arms on Kimbó, being led and supported, and Bully-back'd by that blind Hector Impudence. I am,

S. I R,

Your, &c.

ANNOTATIONS.

1. *F*irst follow Nature, p. 7.

Horace has giv'n a Precept, which may be quoted by undistinguishing People to keep this in countenance.

*Respicere exemplar vitæ, morumq; jubebo
Doctum imitatore[m] & veras hinc Ducere voces.*

For he bids the Person to whom this is directed consult Nature; but then he does three things, which vastly distinguish him from the Writer of the Essay: For first he makes it very plain what sort of Person this is to whom he directs himself, and that is *Doctus Imitator*, one who is both Poet and Critick, Dramatick Poet, and Dramatick Critick; one who writes Plays, and understands the Rules, and knows the Secrets of his Art; notwithstanding which, he may be ignorant of that important one, which Horace is about to discover to him; or in case he does already know it, he may want to be put in mind of it, because his Interest, as we shall find anon, is a strong Temptation to deviate from it. But secondly Horace tells us very intelligibly what he means

means by Nature here, and that is, human Life, and the manners of Men. Thirdly, he makes it as clear as the Sun, what it is to follow Nature in giving a draught of human Life, and of the manners of Men, and that is not to draw after particular Men, who are but Copies and imperfect Copies of the great universal Pattern; but to consult that innate Original, and that universal Idea, which the Creator has fix'd in the minds of ev'ry reasonable Creature, and so to make a true and a just Draught. For as ev'ry Copy deviates from the Original both in Life and Grace, and Resemblance, a Poet who designs to give a true Draught of human Life and Manners, must consult the universal Idea, and not particular Persons. For Example, when a Poet would draw the Character of a covetous or a revengeful person, he is not to draw after *Lucius* or *Caius*; but to consult the universal pattern within him, and there to behold what Revenge or Covetousness would do in such and such Natures, upon such and such Occasions. For if he draws after *Lucius* or *Caius*, the workings of Revenge and Covetousness in these two, being but Copies and imperfect Copies of their workings according to the universal Idea, and the Poet degenerating in his Draught ev'n from those faint and imperfect Copies, whenever a just and discerning Judge comes to compare that Draught with the Original within him, he immediately finds that that Draught falls extremely short of the Truth of Nature, and immediately disapproves of it, as a second, ungraceful, faint, unressembling Copy. Agreeable to this is that passage of the most discerning Author of the Essay upon Poetry.

*If once the Justness of each part is lost,
Well may we laugh, but at the Poet's cost.*

Thus *Horace* here speaks to the Knowing, yet tells them something that several of them want to be taught, and several to be put in mind of. For it has been a Complaint of Two thousand Years standing, that Poets have been us'd to violate their Subjects, and to force their Characters out of complaisance to their Actors, that is, to their Interest. Most of the Writers for the Stage in my time, have not only adapted their Characters to their Actors, but those Actors have as it were sate for them. For which reason the
Lustre

Lustre of the most shining of their Characters must decay with the Actors, while those of *Sophocles*, *Euripides*, *Terence*, and *Ben Johnson* will eternally remain.

2. *Still green with Bays each ancient Altar stands*, p. 13.

If Mr. *Bays* should say here that by each ancient Altar he does not mean ev'ry ancient Poet, but only those few who have been admir'd by all succeeding Ages; to this I answer, that besides that the Expression will by no means bear this Sense, it appears plainly from the two first lines of p. 12. that he speaks of the Ancients in general.

*And tho' the Ancients thus their Rules invade,
As Kings dispense with Laws themselves have made.
Moderns beware.* p. 12.

I think nothing can be more plain, than that here he prefers all the Ancients before all the Moderns, treating the former as so many Monarchs and Legislators at the same time in the Regions of Sense, and the latter as so many Slaves. Besides that these Verses manifestly relate rather to the indifferent Poets among the Ancients, than to those who are admirable; for the indifferent ones have most and oftneft invaded the Rules, Indeed they have scarce ever observ'd them; as *Homer* and *Virgil* have scarce ever transgress'd them.

FINIS.

